

A somewhat careful search has failed to disclose any previous record of color forms either of *Potentilla pumila* or of the closely allied *P. canadensis*. Poiret, indeed, in his original description,¹ speaks of the flowers of *P. pumila* as pale yellow, “jaune pâle”; but it seems hardly possible that he can have had the form with cream-colored petals before him. The absence of any record of it and its probable character as a “retrograde variety” would indicate that it is unusual and not likely to have been collected and sent to Europe as early as 1800. Moreover, Poiret is contrasting his plant with the European *P. verna* L. from which, he says, “cette espèce . . . me paroît devoir être distinguée” and which has deep golden-yellow flowers. In contrast with them, the clear yellow of *P. pumila* might very naturally be spoken of as pale. In a similar manner, the latest monographer of the genus *Potentilla*, Wolf,² uses the Latin phrase “pallide flavis” to describe the petals of a form to which a moment later, he refers as “hellgelb.”

It seems desirable that the Cambridge plant should be recorded under a definite name: it may, then, be called:—

POTENTILLA PUMILA Poir., forma **ochroleuca** f. nov.

A forma typica differt petalis albo-flavescentibus.

Roadside in dry, gravelly soil: Cambridge, Mass., May 26, 1909.
M. L. Fernald and *C. A. Weatherby*.

GRAY HERBARIUM.

NOTES ON MONOTROPSIS ODORATA.

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IT was by a mere accident that I first became acquainted with *Monotropis odorata*, for it was while collecting some leaf mold that I uncovered a nice lot of this interesting little plant. This was more than fifteen years ago; since then I have seen it many times and possibly in all of its various habitats. My first find was made in low chestnut woods, but it is in the sandy pine woods where it seems to be most at home. Like the other plants of the *Monotropoideae* or Indian Pipe Subfamily, it is entirely destitute of green foliage. Its clustered stems,

¹ Encycl. Meth. Bot. 5: 594.

² Monographie der Gattung *Potentilla*, 591.

seldom more than three or four inches in height, are purplish brown in color, and clothed with scale-like scarious bracts of a bright brown color, very closely resembling the dry pine needles in which and under which it delights to grow. The flowers are light rose-purple, of a most delightful fragrance, clover-like, I should say, perfuming the air for some distance around. Even in drying, the plant retains its odor for a considerable length of time.

It comes into bloom, possibly the earliest of any of the plants of its kind, being found generally in full bloom during the first week of April. It was not long after finding the plant, that I learned how it was possible for it to bloom so early, when, two or three years later, while gathering chestnuts, I found a nice clump of the plant with blossoms already apparently fully developed, seemingly only awaiting a few warm days to open.

Last year, a botanical friend announced to me, what he considered a most important discovery: — he had discovered that the fruit of *Monotropsis* was not a capsule, as stated by Gray, but a berry, and that it ripened in the fall. I had never seen the fruit so was not well prepared to attack the assertion, especially, as he insisted that he knew what he was talking about, and while neither of us had specimens to prove our assertions; however, I was sure that what he saw was the fully developed flower buds for the coming spring, and awaited with impatience the fruiting of the plant this year. Thanks to wishing to supply a friend with specimens of the fruit, I kept the task in mind, and six weeks after the first flowers appeared, found still a few withered up fruit stalks with capsules already dehisced.

From the above, I should advise that searchers for *Monotropsis* look for the plant during the early part of April, especially in pine woods. One of its companion plants is *Monotropa Hypopitys*. It is no doubt most abundant in our Coastal Plain, but can also be found farther inland in the Piedmont region in mixed woods, most generally under chestnuts. Four or five weeks later the fruit is ripe. Search in the same localities in early fall will reveal the plant with flower buds quite developed, which no doubt accounts for its early blooming the following spring.

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